

Teaching Children about the Food Groups: Meat and Meat Alternates

This Mealttime Memo focuses on teaching children about meat and meat alternates. It also offers tips on using the meat alternate beans, to control food costs in child care meals. A fun food activity will teach children how to make nut butters.

Meat and meat alternates are important parts of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) menu because these foods provide the important nutrients protein, iron, and zinc. Children need these key nutrients for growth, proper development, and good general health.

Meats and meat alternates such as cheese are excellent sources of high quality, complete proteins. Complete proteins are the kind of protein made up of all the essential amino acids (the chemical building blocks of proteins in foods and the body), which children must have to grow and develop properly.

Meat alternates from the plant kingdom also have proteins. These meat alternates include beans, nuts, and nut butters. When used in combination with other meal components, such as certain grains, they also provide the complete proteins children need.

Teach Children to Identify Meat and Meat Alternates

The Meat and Meat Alternate CACFP meal pattern component includes:

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Chicken | ■ Eggs | ■ Nuts and nut butter |
| ■ Beef | ■ Fish | ■ Beans |
| ■ Pork | ■ Dairy foods, (cheese and yougrt) | |
- Ask children to identify meat and meat alternates they eat for breakfast (i.e., eggs, sausage, beans, cheese, and ham).
 - Ask children to identify meat and meat alternates they eat for lunch or dinner (i.e., turkey, chicken, hamburger patties, peanut butter, beans, cheese, and fish).



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Note to Teacher: Accept all responses and encourage children to try different foods for breakfast. Remember to be sensitive to the cultural and economic influences on the children in your care when discussing foods available outside the child care setting.

Tips for Controlling Food Cost

Offering meat alternate main dishes is a good way to save money in the child care facility. Take advantage of the wide variety of beans that are available today. Beans are packed with valuable nutrients—quality protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Beans of all kinds are a great nutrition buy! Dried beans have the most protein.

Here are some ways to add more beans to your child care menus.

- Serve a meatless bean soup, chili, or stew.
- Replace part of the meat in chili with beans. For example, serve a white bean chicken chili or try Vegetable Chili D-26 from the *USDA Recipes for Child Care* available at nfsmi.org.
- Mix pinto beans and corn with a small amount of salsa. Offer with baked tortilla chips for a healthy snack.
- Make individual black bean pizzas. Top English muffins with tomato sauce, black beans, and mozzarella cheese.
- Add beans to casseroles. For example, serve enchiladas with pinto beans or add black beans to lasagna.
- Add beans to salads; garbanzo beans are a good choice.
- Make dips from white beans or black-eyed peas. Try preparing and serving Hummus E-24 from the *USDA Recipes for Schools* available at nfsmi.org. Also, look for healthy new recipes in cooking magazines and on the Web.

Note to Teacher: Let the children in your care help prepare bean dishes for meals and snacks. Children are more likely to try and accept new foods they help prepare. Cooking with the children will help each child learn to like to cook, and they will learn an essential life skill, being able to prepare their own healthful meals.



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Activity: Making Nut Butter*

In this activity, children will make peanut butter from roasted peanuts and taste it with crackers.

Recipe: Peanut Butter*¹

Equipment and Supplies

- Blender
- Measuring spoons
- Small spoon (one for each child)
- Bowls (one for each child)

Ingredients (for each child)

- 7 unshelled roasted peanuts 🥜🥜🥜🥜🥜🥜🥜
- 1 tsp peanut oil 🥄
- Pinch of salt ⚖️
- 2-3 crackers 🍪🍪🍪



Directions (Prepare in one batch enough for all the children)

1. Place unshelled roasted peanuts in small bowls.
2. Shell the peanuts.
3. Pour shelled peanuts into the blender.
4. Add 1 tsp peanut oil to the blender for every 7 peanuts.
5. Blend mixture.
6. Spoon mixture into bowls.
7. Sprinkle a pinch of salt into bowls.
8. Stir.
9. Spread on crackers with a spoon.

Prepare for the activity.

1. Gather equipment and ingredients.
2. Make a recipe poster by writing the recipe above on large paper to display for children.

Lead the activity.

1. Show children how to shell the peanuts and let them shell them.
2. Help children follow the recipe.
3. Allow children to taste the peanut butter with crackers. Ask them to describe how the peanut butter tastes.

¹*More Than Mud Pies: A nutrition curriculum guide for preschool children (5th ed.)* Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

*Remember that peanuts are common allergies and that children who are allergic may also react to coming in physical contact with peanuts or peanut oil. Use roasted sunflower seeds or other whole seeds or nuts as a substitute for peanuts. Whole peanuts are also a choking hazard for young children.

**Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.

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Recipe

Try this recipe for Beef or Pork Burrito and ask children to identify the meat and meat alternates in the recipe (beef or pork and cheese). Also try the Bean Burrito D-21A recipe available at www.nfsmi.org.

Beef or Pork Burrito D-21¹

Raw ground beef (no more than 20% fat)	2 lb 9 oz	Onion powder	1 ½ tsp
OR	OR	Reduced fat Cheddar cheese, shredded	1 qt 1 cup
Raw ground pork (no more than 20% fat)	2 lb 9 oz	Enriched flour tortillas	25 each
Fresh onions, chopped	½ cup	Reduced fat Cheddar cheese, shredded (optional)	1 ¾ cups 2 Tbsp
OR	OR		
Dehydrated onions	3 Tbsp		
Granulated garlic	1 ½ tsp		
Ground black or white pepper	1 tsp		
Canned tomato paste	1 ½ cups 1 Tbsp		
Water	3 cups		
Chili powder	1 Tbsp 1 ½ tsp		
Ground cumin	1 Tbsp		
Paprika	1 ½ tsp		



Brown ground beef or pork. Drain. Add onions, granulated garlic, pepper, tomato paste, water, chili powder, cumin, paprika, and onion powder. Blend well. Simmer for 30 minutes. Combine shredded cheese with meat mixture. Steam tortillas for 3 minutes or until warm, or place in warmer to prevent torn tortillas when folding. Portion meat mixture with heaping No. 12 scoop (½ cup plus 1 Tbsp) onto each tortilla. Fold around meat envelope style. Place folded burritos seam side down on two half-sheet pans (13" x 18" x 1") which have been lightly coated with pan release spray.

Bake. Conventional oven: 375 °F for 15 minutes; Convection oven: 325 °F for 15 minutes. Heat to 165 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds. Sprinkle shredded cheese (optional) evenly over burritos before serving. Hold for hot service at 135 °F or higher. Portion is 1 burrito.

Number of servings: 25

Serving size: 1 burrito provides the equivalent of 2 oz cooked lean meat, ¼ cup of vegetable, and the equivalent of 1 slice of bread.

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

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Breakfast Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Blueberry Muffins A-03 ¹ Apple juice Milk	Whole wheat toast with peanut butter ² Orange sections Milk	Banana Bread Squares A-13 ¹ Diced apricots Milk	Oatmeal with fresh strawberries Milk	Whole-grain toast with margarine Diced peaches Milk

Lunch Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chicken Barbeque Sandwich F-02 ¹ Green salad with shredded carrots Apple slices Milk	Chili con Carne D-25 ¹ Pineapple wedges Cornbread Milk	Egg salad sandwich Pear slices Steamed broccoli Milk	Pizzaburger F-06 ¹ Butternut squash Steamed green beans Milk	Chicken cutlets breaded with crunchy corn flakes Potatoes with Vegetables I-01A ¹ Orange wedges Whole-grain roll Milk

Snack Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
English muffin pizza Water ³	Whole-grain crackers Cheddar cheese Water ³	Yogurt Fruit Dip G-04 ¹ Apple slices Water ³	Graham crackers Hard cooked egg Water ³	Pineapple Scones A-01 ¹ Milk Water ³

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

²Sunflower butter can be substituted for peanut butter.

³Water is suggested as a beverage for all snacks even when other beverages are offered to encourage children to drink water.

Note: Use fresh fruits and vegetables with possible.

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Books about Meat and Meat Alternates

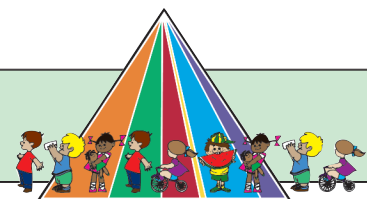
- *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Suess
- *From Peanuts to Peanut Butter* by Kristin Thoennes Keller

Sources

National Food Service Management Institute. (2004). *More than mud pies: A nutrition curriculum guide for preschool children (4th ed)*. University, MS: Author.

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food Nutrition Service, & National Food Service Management Institute. (2005). *USDA recipes for child care*. Retrieved January 11, 2008, from <http://www.nfsmi.org>

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